

Fire safety tips for holiday homes

Every year, careless acts cause hundreds of fires.

Smoking in bed, unmonitored cooking, unsupervised children with matches and lighters and the misuse of supplemental heating equipment account for many of these fires.

Learning to be more diligent and practicing fire safety can eliminate the needless loss of property, serious injury and even death.

Christmas trees

- Choose a fresh Christmas tree and secure it in a sturdy place.
- If using an artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.
- Keep live trees moist and away from heat sources.
- When decorating with lights, be sure to purchase those only labeled by a testing laboratory.
- **Never** place lit candles on a tree.

Candles

- Candle fires in the home increase during the holiday season.
- Don't leave children unattended in a room with lighted candles.
- Always keep candles, matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Remember that in all government facilities (except community chapels during religious services), the use of open flame candles is prohibited.

In the kitchen

- Cooking fires are the most common cause of home fires in military quarters, killing or injuring thousands each year.
- Supervise all kitchen activities.
- **Never** leave cooking unattended.

Home heaters

- Home heating equipment fires are the second leading cause of home fires and related deaths in the U.S. each year.
- Properly maintain heating equipment and use supplemental heating devices – such as portable space heaters, fireplaces or wood burning stoves – with extreme caution. (And remember: These types of devices are prohibited in all government facilities.)

Smoking

- Cigarettes and other smoking materials are the number one cause of home fire deaths.
- **Never** smoke in bed



Don't miss Germany's famous Christmas markets

Compiled by Melanie Casey

It's time again to stroll through your favorite *Weihnachtsmarkt* (or *Christkindlmarkt*), known to most Americans as a Christmas market.

If you haven't had the chance to enjoy a Christmas market, take the opportunity this year to experience centuries' old traditions and the warm and inviting atmosphere of the German holiday season.

Stuttgart Weihnachtsmarkt

One of the most beautiful and largest Christmas markets in Europe began in 1692. Located in Stuttgart's city center, the market includes a village of sales booths with wooden toys, Christmas ornaments, gingerbread, roasted almonds, grilled sausage and of course mulled wine as well as a children's railway, merry-go-round and fairy tale land.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 23 – Mondays to Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Rothenburg Reiterlesmarkt

This market dates back to the 15th century and is one of the oldest in Germany. Every day, the market offers cultural events ranging from organ concerts to puppet theater.

The market is held beneath the twin towers and the illuminated windows of St. Jacobs Church.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 21 – Mondays to Fridays, 12:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Sundays, 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Esslingen Medieval Weihnachtsmarkt

One of the smaller Christmas markets but well worth visiting (and just a short drive from Stuttgart.)

Booths are set up from the Rathausplatz to Postmichelmarkt.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 22 – Daily, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Bad Tölz Christkindlmarkt

Sales, food and beverage booths are set up throughout the historical Marktstrasse. One of the highlights is the performance of the famous *Tölzer Sängerknaben*, or boys' choir.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 24 – Daily, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Augsburg Christkindlmarkt

One of the oldest and most beautiful Christmas markets in Bavaria. Booths are set up at the market square in front of the Renaissance Rathaus. Twenty-four angels perform on the cornices of city hall Saturdays and Sundays at 6 p.m.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 24 – Mondays to Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Frankfurt Weihnachtsmarkt

The Frankfurt Christmas market has become one of the best known in all of Germany due to its size (more than 200 businesses), the historical background of the "Römerberg," the many events associated with it as well as the symbol of the season, a 30-meter high Christmas tree imported from Norway.

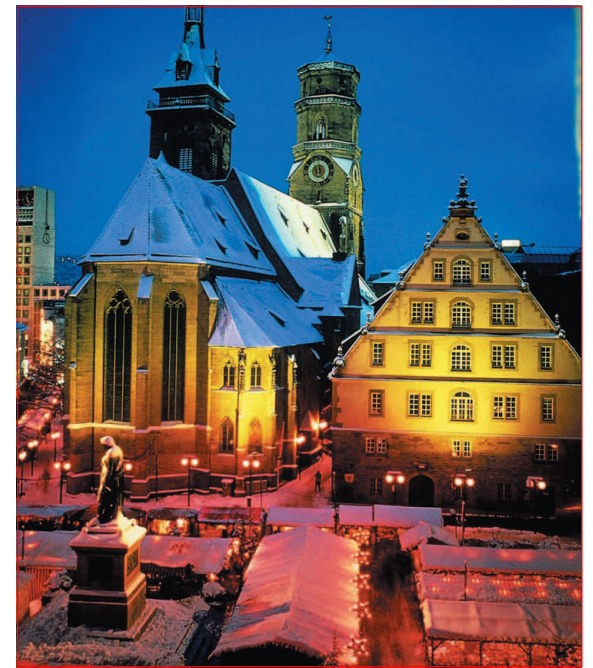
Shopping hours: Through Dec. 22 – Daily, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Munich Christkindlmarkt

At Marienhof, see a remarkable creche with almost life-sized figures. Christmas carols are performed daily at 5:30 p.m. from the city hall balcony.

Children ages 6 to 12 can make free Christmas ornaments inside city hall.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 24 – Mondays to Fridays, 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., Sundays, 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Christmas Eve, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



courtesy City of Stuttgart

The Stuttgart Weihnachtsmarkt is one of the biggest and most beautiful in Europe.

Holiday shopping and fest safety

■ **Maintain a low profile.** Your conduct and mannerisms should not attract attention. For example, keep voices low.

■ **Don't go out in large groups.** Smaller groups are much less likely to be noticed.

■ **Dress to blend in.** Certain types of clothing (such as tennis shoes and baseball caps) may identify you as an American.

■ **Limit alcohol intake.** Try not to overindulge, and plan transportation home in advance.

■ **Be alert to your surroundings.** If you think you're being followed, go to a secure area (the German Polizei always have a station at fests).

Ulm Weihnachtsmarkt

More than 120 sales, food and beverage booths will be set up in front of the Ulmer Münster, the famous cathedral in the historical part of town.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 22 – Mondays to Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Ludwigsburg Weihnachtsmarkt

This very special and romantic Christmas market has more than 160 sales, food and beverage booths set up at the pictures market in the heart of Ludwigsburg, just a short drive from Stuttgart.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 22 – Mondays to Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Heidelberg Weihnachtsmarkt

Sales, food and beverage booths are set up along Hauptstrasse on Kornmarkt, Marketplatz around the Heiliggeistkirche in front of city hall (which is illuminated daily) and on Universitätsplatz.

Shopping hours: Through Dec. 22 – Daily, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

